

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, March 22, 2024

Colton Herta

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to The Thermal Club. Full day of two sessions of practice. We are joined by Colton Herta for Andretti Global.

Colton, full day out there. Tell us how you're feeling about your car.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it felt good. We were one of the many few that didn't put tires there at the end. The time was when it was hot out in the day. The car felt good. Still making improvements. But, yeah, no, it was all right.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Are you enjoying this, just the testing days, the buildup to Sunday?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah. Obviously it's great. So limited in testing here in INDYCAR. Pre-season days really only getting one day in the car before you start the season. It's a lot nicer when you get to do something like this and have test days.

There is stuff that we can learn for other places. Obviously this isn't the most important race for us, but there's stuff we can carry over to different tracks we're working on.

Q. Which tracks?

COLTON HERTA: You'll have to guess (smiling). Many different tracks, many different tracks. I'm sure one of the other people will tell you.

Q. I was asking Kyle about Marcus' issue in the first practice, the left front issue. He talked about how it's become a big topic in the paddock.

COLTON HERTA: I don't know what his issue was.

Q. The left front of Marcus' car caught on fire on pit lane.

COLTON HERTA: I didn't know that. Today?

Q. This morning.

COLTON HERTA: The brakes.

WILL POWER: He had an issue in the bathroom, too (smiling). Whatever that was in that lobster last night or something.

THE MODERATOR: Will Power, ladies and gentlemen.

WILL POWER: I felt bad for him, to be honest, yeah.

Q. What about yourself?

WILL POWER: I got out of there quick. I was just taking a number one.

THE MODERATOR: Will, how was your testing today? Tell us about your car.

WILL POWER: Yeah, car's pretty good. I feel like it's in a good window. Very difficult to tell with the tire situation. Like if you ran in the heat of the day, the track was pretty bad, but you certainly got a good idea of where your balance was that.

We'll see tomorrow. I think a lot of people saved tires. I think the most telling session will be session four, see where we stack up.

Yeah, our group is stacked in qualifying, I just want to say. It's like bloody. There's a tough group. There really are no tough groups anymore. They're all tough. It's almost rigged, they picked it, Let's give some guys...

Yeah, it's always so competitive, you just don't know. Don't know.

Q. St. Pete, a couple issues with the brakes. Now with Marcus' issue, is there a different feeling you're feeling with those this year?

WILL POWER: You're talking about the brakes, right?



... when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Yes.

WILL POWER: Yeah, no, pretty similar feeling, to be honest. It's just a bit finicky with these brakes. I wouldn't say quality control, but some have more bite, some have less bite. Hard to compare.

COLTON HERTA: Quality control...

WILL POWER: I don't want to say that, but yes, quality control. They're not all coming out the same basically, as Marcus found out today in two different ways.

COLTON HERTA: I thought the brakes took a big step back in 2023.

Q. (No microphone.)

COLTON HERTA: Yeah. It feels the same as last year. I felt they took a step back from 2022.

Q. Did any of that have to do with finding the optimal temperature?

COLTON HERTA: I know guys have had problems this year, but I haven't.

WILL POWER: What happened to his brakes?

Q. The left front caught on fire. They took the wheel off. It disintegrated, fell onto the concrete.

WILL POWER: That's a bad situation. Yeah, if that happens at the end of any of these straights...

Q. Obviously a little bit different format this weekend with some members embedded in the team. What has that been like for you guys? Is it kind of different and nice and fun to meet some new people?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think it's fun for them to listen in, especially if they're motorsport enthusiasts. They have a place here, they run around, amateur, enjoy racing. I think it's cool for them to listen to the debriefs, the changes that we do.

I wasn't even aware a guy was listening on the intercom. We went through a number of changes. He would have gotten insight into how a session goes in INDYCAR.

Creates interest, potential sponsors. It's a good concept to have done this, I think. Hopefully we keep doing this sort of thing.

THE MODERATOR: Colton, last night Will Power got on the drums, played 'superstitious' by Stevie Wonder with the band. Colton, you're a drummer, too.

WILL POWER: I tried to get him up there.

COLTON HERTA: I saw him on it doing paradiddles.

WILL POWER: Actually wasn't double stroke.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it was.

WILL POWER: I wasn't doing doubles.

COLTON HERTA: You weren't?

WILL POWER: No. Just quick on the hands. I've been trying to learn double strokes. It's very hard.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: He was like, I'm out. Land a big quallie lap, you have to go out next. I'm not going out next. When Palou put that lap up, I can't do that. I'm saving the tires. The guy's too quick.

Q. Was there a big track evolution from this morning to this afternoon with the temperatures?

WILL POWER: It was more the temperature. I guess it gets a little bit more rubber. There's a huge difference between running when the track's 120 and running when it gets under 100. The makes a big difference in grip.

Yeah, it would be the time of the day that matters. Like if you went straight out tomorrow morning on new tires, it's going to be the quickest time all weekend I think.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, 100%.

Q. A big issue with degradation today. Looking at Sunday, if you get into the finale of the race, do you think it will be difficult to last 20 laps, especially if you're fully loaded with fuel?

COLTON HERTA: I think it could be. I think everyone is going to end up taking care of it. It won't be too big of an issue.

Do they let you fuel in between?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you fill for 10, then fill for another 10.

COLTON HERTA: Never be on a full load. I think

whenever people are worried about deg and these sorts of things, everyone kind of sorts themselves out in the end and figures it out. Equally bad on deg.

Q. Do you think it will be difficult with old tires having a full load of fuel, will the car change midway through the race significantly?

COLTON HERTA: No. I think whatever your problems are, they might get a little bit worse. I think for sure traction is going to be an issue with rear deg. That could get bad for some people.

Like I said, most of the time it just kind of sorts itself out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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